

21. Emerging Opportunities for Growth and Sustainability of Agricultural Sector through the Way of Agriculture and Tourism

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Abstract

Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. As per the current data available, even today more than 65% of Indian population directly or indirectly depends upon agriculture for their livelihood. Hence a proper and sustainable growth in the field of agriculture is a major aspect through which this occupation and online businesses which are directly or indirectly associated with it can be grown in positive direction.

There is a need as per the changing trend of economy that the rate of operations of various businesses or occupations should be changed. This is due to the fact that the business economy is very much dynamic. What is trending today may not continue to trend tomorrow. So it is very much essential that one should make necessary changes in one's business so that it will not be treated as outdated.

Keywords: Agro Tourism, Tourism, Tourism Centre

Aims and Objectives

The ultimate objective of this research paper is to suggest some parallel business in relation with agriculture. Accordingly the aims and objectives of the research paper are:

1. To suggest parallel business along with agricultural activities
2. To suggest additional source and ways of increasing the income of farmers
3. To identify the changing needs of the tourism sector

Methodology

The study is restricted to the benefits which can be derived by the agriculture sector with the aligned business activities. For the purpose of study the information has been obtained both from primary source as well as from secondary source. The primary data has been collected through personal meeting with some of the farmers performing some aligned business along with

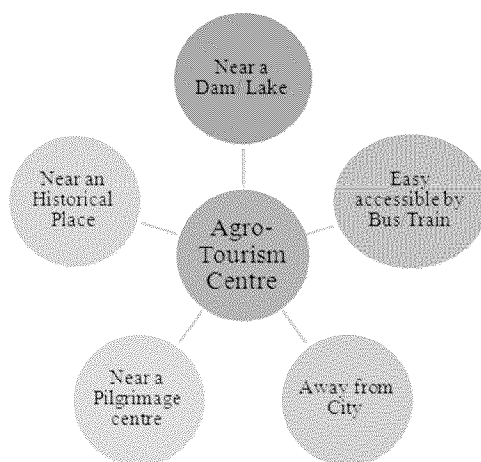
the agriculture activities. The secondary data has been obtained through some of the books published and from the websites of Government of Maharashtra and Government of India.

Importance of Study

As agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy, though the sector facing a lot of difficulties is very much inevitable. The number of farmers committing suicide are notable figures. The returns from this investment made in agricultural activities by the farmers are negative many times. The reasons for this are many, like lack of or too much of rainfall, sudden climate changes, lack of required water, increasing the need and use of chemicals and fertilizers which increase the cost of production, ups and downs in the commodities prices etc.

Hence there should be some online business or activity along with agriculture so that the support can be provided to overcome the undue uncertainties of output from agricultural produce.

Location for the Agro-Tourism Centre



The place of agro-tourism centre must be easily accessible by road and rail. Tourists want to enjoy some historical and natural tourist places alongside agro-tourism. Hence, the centre should be developed near those tourist places. It is more beneficial to both tourists and farmers. The places which are already tourist centres like Mahabaleshwara, Panchgani, Nashik, Jotiba, Narshingvadi, Pandharpur, Akkalkot, Konkan etc. are better places for the event of agro-tourism. Aside from these places, farmers can develop their centres in any affordable places.

Concept of the Study

Agro tourism is one of the trending businesses in India. This concept has already been practised by many farmers in and around Maharashtra and it has proved to be good for the farmers. As per the personal study most of the farmers aligned with some business along with the farming activities are performing quite well financially.

The concept is that along with the farming activities Agro tourism should be followed by the farmers. Today, in the era of busy life, every man, woman and even child is too busy and has a hectic schedule due to complex business work, high work pressure, too much work from home, etc. Hence the need for some relief among the people has become a need for all. It has been noticed since many years that in many of the outskirts of big cities like Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Amravati et cetera there is huge crowding of people during the weekend. Even after the lock downs and where the pandemic situation due to COVID-19 is not yet over, there is huge outings by the people during weekends. As due to pandemic the people were stuck in the house within the four walls, there is something called “Revenge Tourism” which has become popular among the people, that is people don’t want to miss the enjoyable opportunities to travel at different locations and relive their minds.

Agro-tourism is therefore a flourishing concept which is seen as having a bright future. All one needs to do is to develop a proper infrastructure within or nearby the farmland where the tourists can come and stay over in the lap of the nature. This can be done by the farmer by himself or he can do this as a business with someone who tends to make such investments. The tourism can also be provided with agricultural search Safari, where tourists can be shown how some particular crops, vegetables, fruits, etc. are grown. Also due to this the people in urban areas can also be attracted regarding what and how farming is being done and hence the urban crowd can know how farming is done. Nowadays people do not have even fair knowledge about farming, this new concept can hence make them aware about it.

All this will definitely help the farmers to increase their revenues and also they will try to keep their farming activities as updated as possible so that it will attract more and more tourist. Also this might get new and innovative suggestions from their tourists too.

Requirements

Although the mentioned concept sounds quite good and as a helping hand to farmers, it requires the following:

Ample of land which may be more than 5 acres

Investment which will depend upon the infrastructure to build the resort, restroom, etc for the tourists where they can spend their time and can live over a few days. Also a regular working capital for meeting the expenses of maintaining the place, salaries of staff appointed, maintaining the very same etc. A proper marketing strategy is essential so as to attract more and more tourists.

Problems of the Agro-Tourism in Maharashtra

Maharashtra features a greater potential of the event of the agro-tourism centres, thanks to the good natural and climatic conditions. However, there are some problems within the process of agro tourism development in the state. Major challenges and problems are as follows;

1. 148 of the 355 Talukas within the state are consistently drought-prone
2. Lack of perfect knowledge about the agro-tourism
3. Weak communication skills and lack of commercial approach of the small farmers
4. Lack of capital to develop basic infrastructure for the agro-tourism
5. Ignorance of the farmers regarding such activities
6. Presence of unorganized sector within the Agri-Tourism industry.
7. Ensuring hygiene and basic requirements considering urban visitors

Conclusion

From the above study it can be stated that Agro tourism maybe a trending and acceptable concept. It may be quite appreciable if it is implemented taking into consideration the need, lacking and requirements of the farmers. This will also enable the urban crowd to be aware about the farming activities and hence the gap between the urban areas and rural areas can be overcome to some extent. Also a sense of spending holidays in the lap of the agricultural land may give a sense of relief and happiness to the tourists. Overall, this concept might be very much fruitful and can benefit farmers as well as can provide online business opportunities to them.

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